

# El Toro Trail

Formalizing an Existing Trail System

Parks & Recreation Commission - Workshop Meeting

September 4, 2014



# **Welcome to the El Toro Trail PRC Workshop Meeting**

## **Please meet our Project Team**

### **City of Morgan Hill, Public Works**

Karl Bjarke, Julie Behzad, David Gittleson

### **City of Morgan Hill, Community Services**

Chris Ghione, Anthony Eulo

### **City of Morgan Hill, Police Department**

Jerry Neumayer

### **Morgan Hill Fire/CalFire**

Jamie Norton

### **Open Space Authority**

Andrea Mackenzie, Matt Freeman, Derek Neumann



## PURPOSE OF ACCESS STRATEGY

To identify trail access points to El Toro Mountain with appropriate trail head amenities in a manner that makes the trail available to as many citizens as possible while not overly burdening any particular neighborhood.

# Why are Trails so Desirable?

- **Recreational demands** of a growing City
- **Nationwide trends**
- **Top-rated recreation activities** can all be met by trails
- **Life style changes:**
  - ♥ Healthy & affordable
  - ♥ Natural outdoor experience
  - ♥ Environmentally friendly
- **Asset** to the whole community

# Trail Project Objectives

- Develop and implement a community trail system on El Toro Mountain consistent with the Adopted Trails and Natural Resources Study
- Develop a multi location access strategy that provides community access to El Toro Mountain in a manner that provides for adequate amenities and respects neighborhood needs
- Involve the community in the decision making process and address neighborhood concerns
- Partner with the Open Space Authority to acquire land, maintain the trail system, and provide environmental education programs
- Design a comprehensive and effective safety and security plan that is fiscally sustainable
- Restore the existing vertical trails to a natural condition by planting native California species
- Develop a “Friends of El Toro Trail” community volunteer program to help patrol, maintain, and keep the trail clean on a regular basis



# Project Background

- El Toro Mountain is one of the most visible landmarks in Morgan Hill with its silhouette marking the City's official logo. It has long been a hiking destination for local Morgan Hill residents.
- In 1989, the City purchased a 42 acre parcel to preserve the land as open space, allow public access, and to prevent development .
- The Open Space Authority recently purchased a hillside parcel on the southerly flank of El Toro Mountain for the purpose of expanding open space inventory and to provide a trail connection to the trail system on El Toro.
- A trail system on El Toro Mountain was included in the Trails and natural Resources Study.
- The El Toro Trail project is also consistent with the Open Space Authority's "Santa Clara Valley Greenprint," A detailed land and resource conservation vision that will guide the Authority's work over the next 30 years.
- In 2010, the City Council approved the purchase of an 18-acre hillside parcel, known as the Acton property, for the purpose of expanding open space on El Toro Mountain, preventing future development of that parcel, and to provide a trail opportunity for the citizens of Morgan Hill.
- As a part of that 18 acre purchase, a trail access easement was acquired at the westerly terminus of Via Grande Drive.



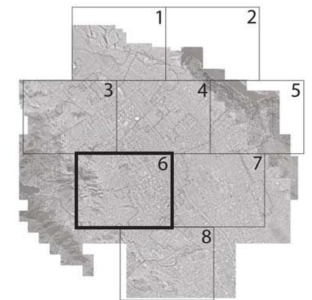


# Trails and Natural Resources Study Map




Map 6  
Legend

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  | City Limits  |
|  | Existing Unpaved Trails  |
|  | Proposed Unpaved Trails  |
|  | Existing Improved Trails   |
|  | Proposed improved Trails   |
|  | Existing Paved Trails  |
|  | Proposed Paved Trails  |
|  | Existing Sidewalk Trail Connections  |
|  | Proposed Sidewalk Trail Connections  |
|  | Trail Route Within Private Property<br>Note: proposed trail route to be considered when landowner is a willing participant |
|  | Existing Staging Area  |
|  | Proposed Pedestrian Bridge   |
|  | Designated Open Space  |
|  | Open Space and City-Owned Land   |
|  | City-Owned Land  |



SCALE: 1"=1000'



A horizontal scale bar with alternating black and white segments. Below the bar, the distances 250', 500', and 1000' are marked.

**Trails and Natural Resources Study**  
City of Morgan Hill



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# Informal Trail System

(Trails not open to the Public)





# Informal Trail Conditions

- Environmental degradation
- Viewshed impact
- Private property trespassing
- Reports of Nuisance
- Vandalism to fences and signage





# El Toro Trail Conceptual Plan & Draft Trailhead Location

- Met with Via Grande neighborhood in June 2012
- Shared Conceptual Plan & Draft Trailhead Location
- Neighborhood residents provided feedback



## Trail Conversations with the Community

- Quiet street now dealing with non-resident pedestrian traffic and increased noise
- Concerns about non-neighborhood trail users and trail user vehicles parked on street
- Noisy trail users in early morning and evening hours
- Loitering at trailhead
- Restroom accessibility
- Potential for trail users to start fires and deter wildlife
- Trail users leaving trash on the trail and in the neighborhood
- Some support idea of neighborhood access to trails



# ACCESS STRATEGY APPROACH

1. **Creating multiple trail access points:** Spreads access to minimize impacts to any one neighborhood. Multiple access points also allows for redundant access for emergency, maintenance and security purposes.
2. **Creating one primary trail head:** Primary trailhead to have typical amenities such as parking lot, information kiosk, and potential restroom facilities. Public information should market primary trail head for those inclined to drive and park.
3. **Focus location of primary trailhead off of DeWitt Avenue,** south of Spring Avenue. Greater potential for parking facility and other trail head amenities. Residential density is less.
4. **Promoting the trail system as a healthy recreation alternative** for Morgan Hill residents. Studies show that the presence of other trail users discourages undesirable behavior.

# ACCESS STRATEGY APPROACH

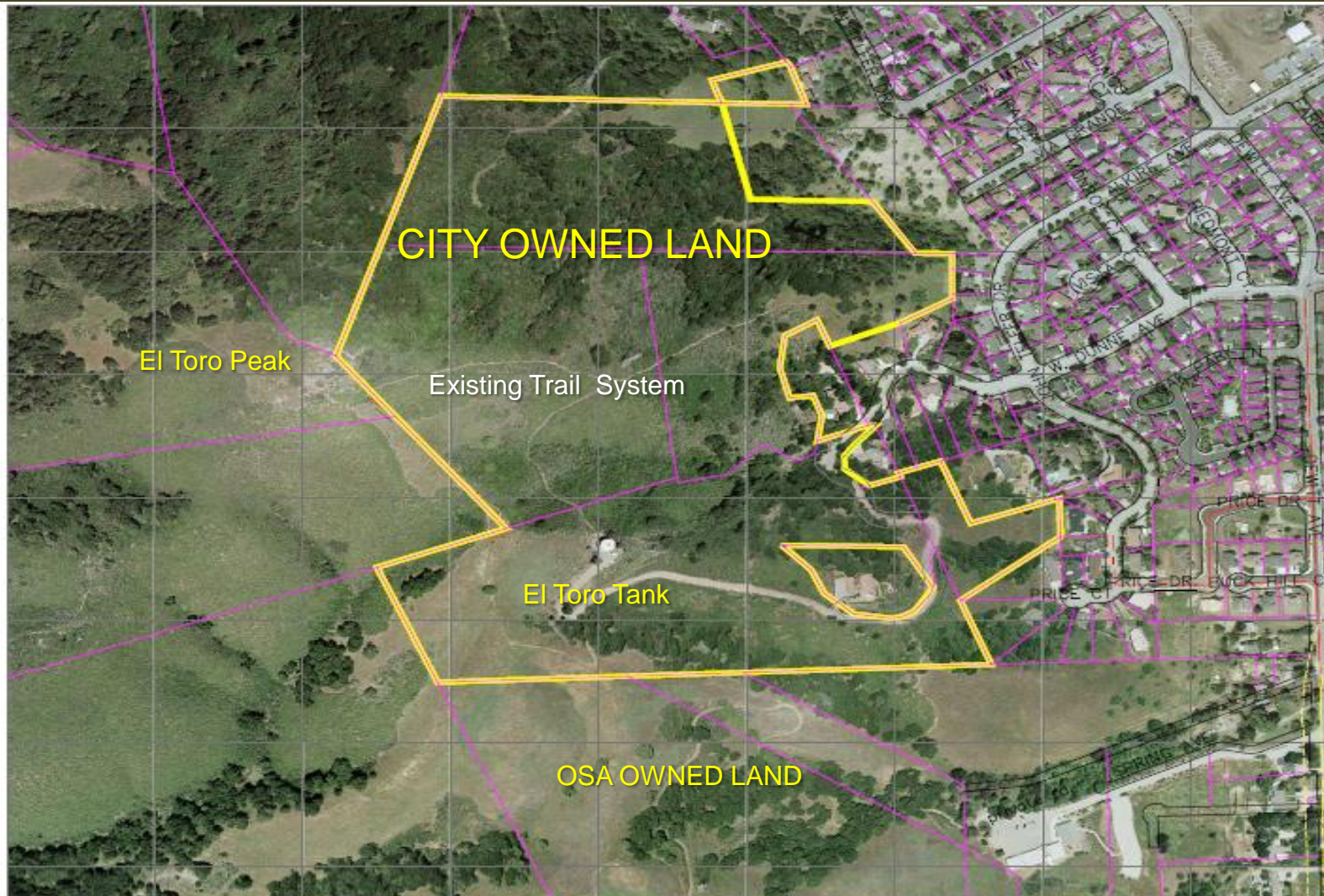
5. **Creating one “recessed trailhead”** to serve access points at Alkire, Via Grande and Main Avenue. The recessed trailhead will be set back from the neighboring streets and could contain a stretching apparatus and kiosk. This will reduce the potential of loitering at the end of residential streets.
6. **Actively working with affected neighborhoods** to create an access system that respects the privacy of those residents.
7. **Taking advantage and promoting** the use of existing public parking such as that found at City Hall/Library facilities. By directing parking away from the neighborhoods, traffic congestion and noise levels will remain low near the access points.
8. **Striving to locate restroom facilities** at the primary trailhead. Utilize restrooms at public facilities at the Civic Center and Library.
9. **Design and implement** a comprehensive trail sign program for parking, access points, and points of interest.

# ACCESS STRATEGY APPROACH

10. Considering emergency response as a factor for establishing trail heads. Multiple trail heads improves the response time for police and fire.
11. Establishing a "Friends of El Toro" volunteer program to help promote the proper use of the trails, to help create a safe environment for trail users, and to help keep the trails free of trash.
12. Actively work with the Open Space Authority to assist with trail maintenance, fauna and flora education and native species protection.
13. Engage property owners about acquiring property rights to further the access strategy






# City Acquired Open Space Land








# El Toro Trail Access Strategy

## Formalizing an Existing Trail

-  Length of City Trail: 1.2 miles
-  Length of OSA trail: .71 miles
-  Street Loop Connections

-  Length of Trail to Peak: 1.2 miles
-  Length of Trail Connection: .71 miles
-  Neighborhood Access footpath

### TRAIL FEATURES:

- Utilized existing trails where possible
- Average slope of new trails is 12.5% (existing is 32%)
- Firm compacted surface, cross slope of 2%





# Primary Trailhead

## TRAIL AMENITIES MAY INCLUDE:

- \*Parking Lot
- \*Restroom Facilities
- \*Water Services
- \*Trash receptacles
- \*Kiosk with trail maps
- \*Bicycle Racks





# Primary Trailhead

## TRAIL AMENITIES MAY INCLUDE:

- \*Large Parking Lot
- \*Restroom Facilities
- \*Water Services
- \*Trash receptacles
- \*Kiosk with trail maps
- \*Bicycle Racks





# Secondary Trail Head

## TRAIL AMENITIES MAY INCLUDE:

- \*Parking Lot
- \*Restroom Facilities
- \*Water Services
- \*Trash receptacles
- \*Kiosk with trail maps
- \*Bicycle Racks



OSA Trail

Trail Access Point

Church

Dewitt Avenue

Dewitt Avenue

Dunne Avenue

Spring Avenue

Alternate Trailhead

Edmundson Tank

City Owned Property

Future Neighborhood  
Trail Connection

Community Park

Google earth



# Dunne Avenue Access Point

## NEIGHBORHOOD MITIGATION MEASURES

- \*Trail Parking at Civic Center
- \*Trash Receptacle at Trail Entrance
- \* Dog Bag Dispenser





# Neighborhood Access Points

## NEIGHBORHOOD MITIGATION MEASURES

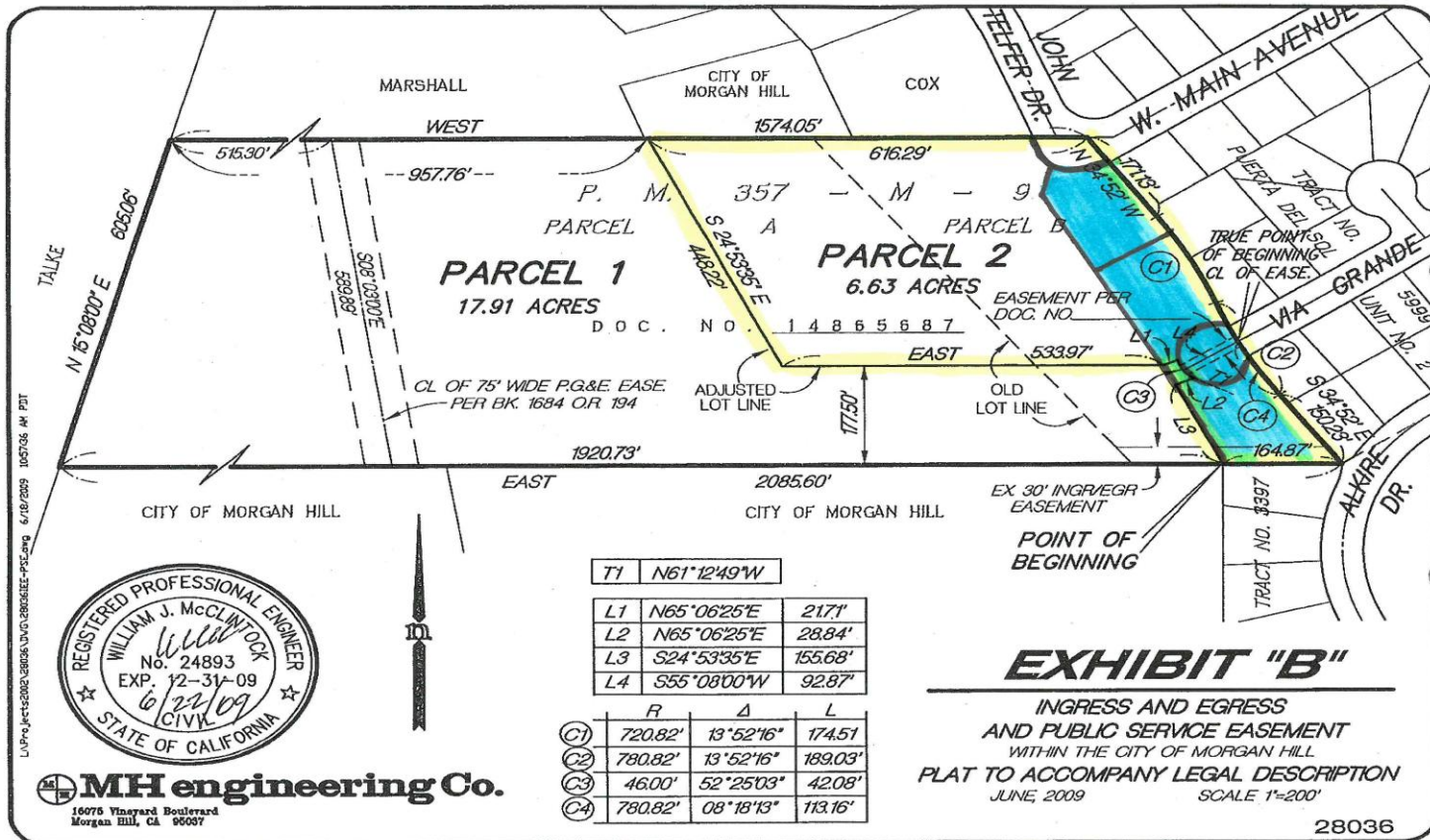
- \*Trail Parking at Civic Center
- \*Trash Receptacle at Trail Entrance
- \*Recessed Trailhead
- \*Dog Bag Dispenser
- \*Restrooms at Library/Civic Center





# Acton Parcel Exhibit

Proposed Land Acquisition Area



Neighborhood Access Points

# Existing Trail Rehabilitation

- **Restoration** Re-vegetate informal trails with California native tree and plant species
- **Fencing** Used to deter informal trail use, also be used as support for signage
- **Signage** Used to deter informal trail use and provide users with additional information about new trail

# Proposed Trail Users & Trail hours



Hikers



Dog walkers



Runners



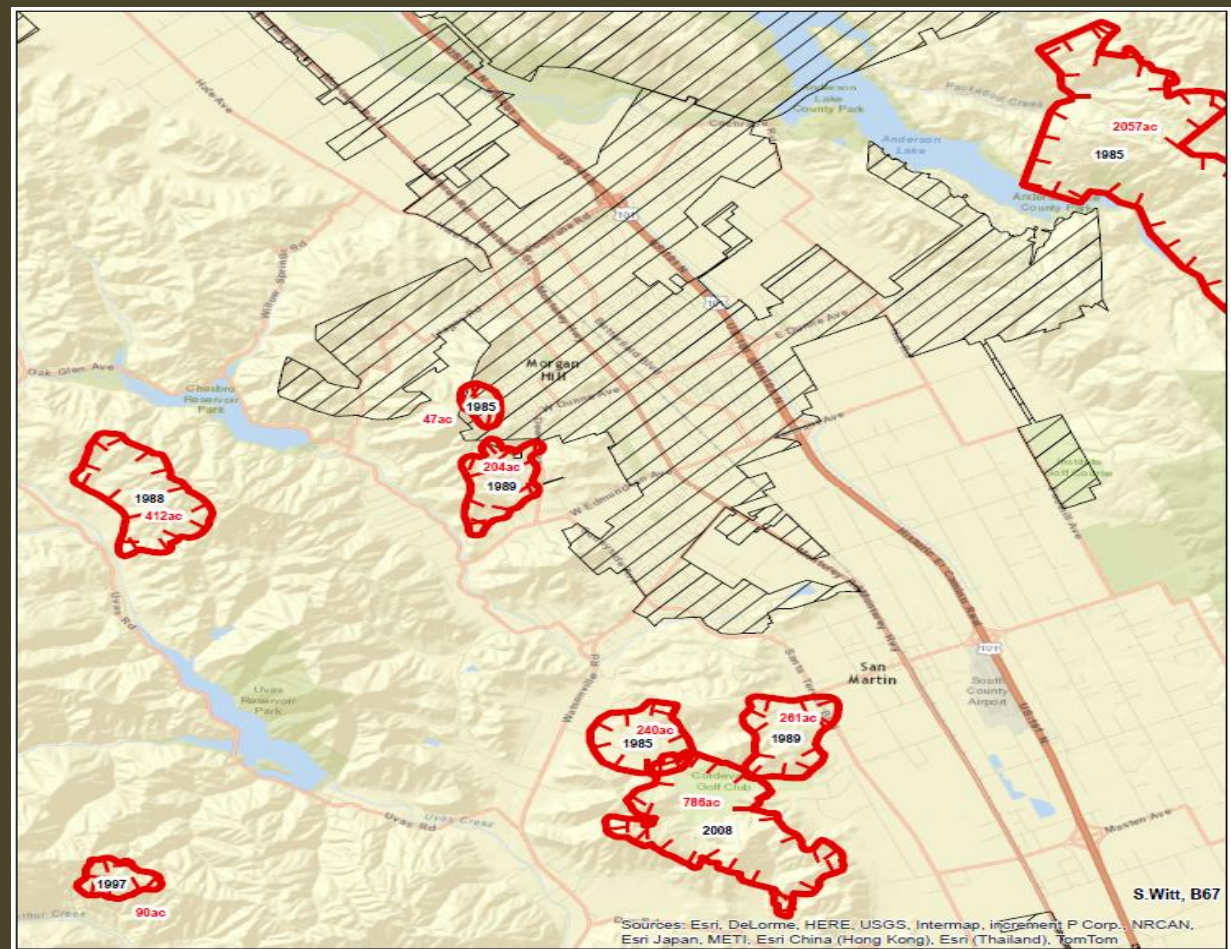
Evaluate other potential user groups

# Trail Safety & Security

- The City (including its Police Department and Fire Department) is currently evaluating strategies to minimize the potential unsafe conditions. As part of the project design process, safety will be a significant factor. It is important to understand prior to project construction, the City is committed to ensuring that an effective safety plan is developed and ready for implementation.
- Although trails are not crime-free, compared to the communities in which they exist, trails have an excellent public safety record.
- Documented evidence that the development of new trails in communities has not increased crime in those areas. Presence of other users helps to minimize undesirable behavior.
- Typically, trail users do not cause fires. Trail rules will deter users from smoking, camping or building fires.



- Improving the trails will create improved fire access, reduce response time and provide fire breaks.
- Provide fire hook-up to EL Toro Tank.
- Develop long range fuel management plan.
- Provide wild fire training to volunteers and Open Space employees.



# On Going Trail Maintenance/Monitoring

- City and OSA will determine the most appropriate way to maintain and monitor the trail system that provides for a high level of safety.
- The City envisions a “Friends of El Toro” volunteer group to walk the trail and collect trash on a weekly basis.





# Trail Funding

- The FY 2014/15 Capitol Improvement Program budget for the El Toro Trail project is \$1,030,000.
- In addition, there is also \$350,000 budgeted for open space land acquisitions.





# Staff Recommendations to Council

**Recommend approving the “Access Strategy”, including;**

- Continue to Involve the community in the decision making process
- Partner with the Open Space Authority to acquire land, and develop a maintenance agreement for the trail system.
- Develop a “Friends of El Toro Trail” volunteer program
- Develop a safety and security plan
- Engage property owners about access opportunities



# Next Steps

- City Council to consider “Access Strategy”
- Design/Environmental study
- Property Acquisition
- Construction



# QUESTIONS?

**Thank you for attending tonight's meeting**

**We look forward to your continued project participation and support**

